

## WELCOME FACES THAT GREET AMUSEMENT SEEKERS

### The Experimental Griffith

By EARLE DORSEY.

There is a very incidental quality about the genius of David Wark Griffith. The more one studies Griffith and his work in the cinema realm, the more strongly is one impressed by the feeling that Griffith is, first of all, a sublime experimenter and that the quality we have come to call his genius is, after all, largely the by-product of his incessant experimentation.

Griffith, of course, possesses a story-telling power which is undeniable and it clearly amounts to genius when placed side by side with the work of all the inefficient and dull horde of reporters turned writers and property men turned directors which infest the films today. Great though the debt of the film art to Griffith may be for such productions as "The Birth of a Nation," "Intolerance," "Judith of Bethulia" and all the classic host of one and two-reel gems upon which his reputation really rests, the film art is yet more deeply indebted to Griffith for the product of his bold pioneering and oftentimes thankless experimentation.

Possibly the greatest single technical asset of the motion-picture industry today is the "cut-back," that facile instrument whereby a director may "cut-back" his story to a previous time or a previous incident—an asset which is most denied to the spoken stage and which must be arrived at chiefly by struggling indirection. It was Griffith who gave the film the "cut-back" and it was Griffith also who gave the films the "close-up"—the idea that permitted the enlarging of a photographed face hundreds of times, to reproduce, with telling dramatic force the effect of certain dramatic action on the mind of a character.

The development of these purely technical devices was accomplished by Griffith through the medium of scores of one and two-reel gems which the public, a few years back, so closely identified with the "AB" trademark of the American Biograph, the birthplace of Griffith's fame. His emergence from what has come to be known as "the Biograph era" did not result, however, in a cessation of Griffith's experimentation. "The Birth of a Nation" represented the great producer's successful attempt to produce a full-sized novel in celluloid, although he had produced, rather fearfully, a celluloid tome which was, at that time, of extraordinary length, in "Judith of Bethulia."

"Intolerance," his next big work after "The Birth of a Nation," was simply an extremely daring, though not a thoroughly successful, experiment to tell a film story in a new way. Here we found Griffith attempting to tell four stories at once and concentrating them all in a series of four flashing climaxes at the end. Technically, the experiment was fruitful but dramatically it was not, for the reason that the mental alertness of the average audience was not up to the mark required by the material Griffith furnished. It was a question of too much story for the average mind to digest and the net result of "Intolerance" was a magnified case of public mental indigestion.

"In Hearts of the World," which followed "Intolerance," as well as in "The Great Love" and "The Greatest Thing in Life," Griffith apparently was experimenting with the camera as a medium of propaganda. Had the attempt involved not so much experimentation in Mr. Griffith's mind and more of the confident belief that the picture camera was a powerful propaganda weapon, the dramatic results of all three might have reached a higher mark, but one cannot believe that Mr. Griffith took seriously either "The Greatest Thing in Life" or "The Great Love," though we esteemed "The Great Love" a delicate, inspirational gem.

In the last Griffith picture exhibited in the East—"A Romance

### McKim a Mean Devil Only When at Work

There are all kinds of mean devils in the movies who earn a living by their general cussedness and villainy, but when it comes to being the nastiest, meanest, most polite devil in all the films, Robert McKim, who is the villain of "Partners Three," Enid Bennett's latest photoplay, which comes to Loew's Columbia today, is that nasty, mean devil at his very, celluloid worst.

On the screen, McKim is one of those mean, low-down cutthroats you'd like to punch in the nose if he wasn't too big, and who pulls his villainies in such a slick way that you just barely lack excuse to commend him. Off the screen, Robert McKim is the type of man for whom you'd like to buy a dish of pep or even an ice cream soda. It's wonderful how such a clean-looking fellow off the screen can do such dirty work on the screen without being contaminated. It just goes to show you you can't tell a villain by his off-stage manner.

Down in San Jacinto, Texas, they talk nearly as much about Bob McKim as they do about real estate values. Bob had a fling at the stage before he went to California and got a job with Tom Ince, but those who remember William S. Hart in "The Disciple," one of Hart's very earliest screen plays, will remember the picture that gave Bob McKim his first chance at celluloid devilry.

Bob was such a villainous villain with Hart that Ince immediately signed him up and since that time, Bob McKim, the meanest of screen devils, has been doing the "heavy" work for William S. Hart, Dorothy Dalton, Charles Ray, and Enid Bennett. Hence, "Bob" McKim is up to more of his slick rough stuff in "Partners Three," at the Columbia this week.

Although no special star is featured in "The Turn in the Road," being shown at Moore's Rialto this week, little Ben Alexander, who plays "Bob," can be justly accorded high honor.

Ben takes the center of the stage from the third reel on to the finish, and his remarkably clever work proves him to be a real prodigy. He creeps into the heart of the audience with the same ease that he crawled into the arms of the crusty old money king, who was all trussed up like a trip roast expecting to be shot any moment by the desperate strikers. Ben has a big part to play and does it like a little man, taking the spotlight away from the grown-ups and making them like it.

This little 8-year-old chap has scored some distinct successes in big productions, his most notable achievement being in "Hearts of the World," the big Griffith production.

Lloyd Hughes & Peuling Curley  
"The Turn in the Road"  
RIALTO

### The Dollys' Dancing School

Just before the war ended, 300 blue-jackets from the Great Lakes Naval Training Station gave a theatrical performance at the Auditorium in Chicago. So great was the success of this production, which was called "The Great Lakes Revue," and which was written and acted entirely by enlisted men in the navy, that it ran for two weeks in a theater seating 4,000 people, and all who saw the show marvelled at the wonderful dancing performed by the "gobs."

Chicagoans, however, knew that the boys would dance well, for they were taught their steps by no less authority than dancing than the Dolly Sisters, the queens of terpsichore, who were then appearing in Chicago in the musical comedy success, "Oh, Look!"

and who will be seen in this piece rather nice to write plays," she said. "I have known many doctors and lawyers who imagined that it would be much more fun than their own professions; but they had very little knowledge of the very real craft and field workmanship which it involved. "Underneath the finishest fantasy, the gayest farce, there is a stern technique and craft. Of course, the woman writer has an equal chance in this field with men. Success isn't dependent upon sex, but upon ability. Observation in the theater is, of course, most necessary, and experience on the stage is of inestimable value. But, as in all forms of art, attainment of any skill in it depends in the end upon yourself and the amount of work you are willing to put into it.

### Rachel Crothers on Plays

Rachel Crothers, whose comedy, "33 East," will be the attraction at the Shubert-Garrick this week, has a high respect for her calling. Miss Crothers has established herself as an expert in her line, as was instanced in "Old Lady 31," and more particularly in "A Little Journey," which is one of the hits of New York at this time.

This dramatist was lately questioned as to the secret of her art, the ingredients most necessary to the playwright in producing a successful drama. First, of course, she said, the would-be dramatist has to be endowed with the dramatic instinct, the ability to visualize scenes and weigh the value of an incident. This, she said, is a gift of the gods, cannot be acquired, but possessed of that, he must fit himself for his art by unremitting work.

### Attractions Listed For Week of March 23

**NATIONAL**—Charles Dillingham's production of "The Canary," with Julia Sanderson and Joseph Cawthorn, and cast including Sam Hardy, Doyle and Dixon, Maud Eburne, Louis Harrison, Edna Bates and others.

**POLIS**—"Little Simplicity," musical comedy; book and lyrics by Rida Johnson Young, Augustus Barrett wrote the music. The featured player is Walter Catlett. Other important members of the cast are Marjorie Gateon, Mabel Withee, Sylvia Jason, Carl Gentvoort, Stewart Baird and the Cameron Sisters.

**GARRICK**—"Come on, Charley," George V. Hobart's latest satirization, is founded on the stories of Thomas Addison; twenty-four characters are required to portray the comedy, which is in three acts and five scenes. Lynn Overman and Miss Josephine Stevens are featured principals; others in the cast, Dodson Mitchell, Frank McCormack, Morris Barrett, Eunice Elliott, Ann Mason, Estelle Taylor, Vinton Freddley, Robert Randall, Roland Edwards, Walter Allen, Russell Parker, Dan Kelly, Millie Butterfield, W. H. Dupont and Robert Wessells.

**SHUBERT-BELASCO**—"Eyes of Youth," the work of Max Marcin and Charles Guernon. Play is in three acts. Cast headed by Alma Tell.

**B. F. KEITH'S**—Vaudeville; Gus Edwards and Company in his latest song revue; Alan Rogers, the American tenor; the Art production; Donkey and Sales; Sidney Phillips, Jane and Erwin Connolly; Patten and Marks; the Girl in the Air; and the pictorial news.

**CRANDALL'S KNICKERBOCKER**—Sunday and Monday, Constance Talmadge in "The Experimental Marriage;" Tuesday and Wednesday, Alla Nazimova in "Out of the Fog;" Bookings for remainder of the week not completed.

**CRANDALL'S**—Sunday and Monday, Marion Davies in "The Belle of New York;" Tuesday and Wednesday, "The Brand;" Thursday and Friday, Ethel Clayton in "Maggie Clayton;" Saturday, Carlyle Blackwell in "Hit or Miss."

**MOORE'S RIALTO**—"In Wrong," starring Jack Fleckford.

**CRANDALL'S SAVOY**—Sunday and Monday, William S. Hart in "The Breed of Men;" Tuesday and Wednesday, Alice Joyce in "The Lion and the Mouse;" Thursday, Dorothy

### Stage and Film Gossip

Director Tod Browning is preparing to start work on Mary MacLaren's new screen vehicle. He has just finished Priscilla Dean's latest, "Raggedy Ann." Thurston Hall will play opposite Miss MacLaren in her new feature.

Director Paul Powell and his star, Monroe Salisbury, are at Pine Crest making "The Great White Darkness." Claire Anderson and Helen Jerome Eddy are leading feminine members of the cast.

Eddie Polo has just completed "A Prisoner for Life," a two-reel Western drama, under Jack Dillon's direction.

Harry Harvey, who produced the Marie Walcamp serial, "The Lion's Claws," and whose C. Henry masterpiece, "The Caballero's Way," has just released under the title of "The Border Terror," is tasting for an independent production in which he will play the lead.

Eddie Kull, Rupert Julian's photographer, who is rated as an "ace" in his craft and who photographed "The Millionaire Pirate," Monroe Salisbury's new starring vehicle, with artistic effectiveness, is to be the star-director's newest literary victim.

Charles Ray is riding a rocky road on a bicycle in the picture he has just started. He is portraying an ambitious young man who started out as a house to house canvasser for an electric vibrator.

The right of either wife or husband, bored by the monotony imposed by limited salary, to step out in last society is the question taken by C. Gardner Sullivan as a theme for the latest story he has provided Enid Bennett.

Dorothy Dalton is working hard on the last picture she will make in the West before going East to make several big productions with New York atmosphere.

Preliminary preparations are being made at the Thomas H. Ince studio in Culver City for the big super productions the famous director proposes to make during the coming year.

Grace Ellsworth, who was last seen in "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath," was recently engaged by the Messrs. Shubert to play the part of Mrs. Welsh, the sophisticated New Yorker, in "A Little Journey" at the Vanderbilt Theater, New York.

Harold Atteridge, who provided the libretto for "Monte Cristo, Jr.," at the Winter Garden, New York, and "Sinbad," has gone to Panama for a rest.

Miss Jean Devereaux, a prima donna of considerable note, has been added to the cast of "The Melting of Molly," at the Broadhurst Theater, New York, which is recognized as one of the season's most popular musical comedies.

Charles (Chic) Sale, who is appearing in the new Winter Garden show, "Monte Cristo, Jr.," has purchased a fine estate in the suburbs of New York.

One of New York's greatest stage favorites of a few years back, Madge Lessing, is back home. She arrived from London a day or so ago. There was never a more popular woman at the Casino in the days when that house was the acknowledged center of musical entertainment, unless, perhaps, it was Lillian Russell.

A new musical play called "Something Doing," the book and lyrics of which are by Frank Mandel, and the music by Harry Carroll, will be produced shortly by Max Spiegel. The cast, it is rumored, is likely to include two well-known stars.

One of these days there will be placed on the boards for public inspection a new musical play, entitled "With Love and Kisses." It is the joint work of Glen McDonough and Raymond Hubbell.

So far as can be ascertained, the "Ziegfeld Follies" in St. Louis last week recorded the biggest patronage in the history of the world's amusements for a regular stage play. The aggregate was \$36,000.